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5 April 2022

Dear Isobel Sizer

Ref:FOI2022/04933  
FOI2022/04934  
FOI2022/04940  
FOI2022/04935

## Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your enquiries of 8 March 2022, which we have considered under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOI Act).

You asked for the following information:

- "1. For the meeting held on 01/03/2021 between Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP and Dame Clare Furse, with purpose To discuss voluntary carbon markets; and*
- 2. For the meeting held on 01/03/2021 between Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP and Bill Winters, with purpose To discuss voluntary carbon markets; and*
- 3. For the meeting held on 26/07/2021 between Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP and Dame Clare Furse, with purpose To discuss voluntary carbon markets; and*
- 4. For the meeting held on 15/04/2021 between Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP and UK Carbon Markets Working Group - ATTENDEES: UK Voluntary Carbon Markets Forum, Lord Mayor of the City of London, Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets, Tata Steel, ClimateCare, Schroders, Low Carbon Trading, Clifford Chance, McKinsey, Unilever, City of London Corporation, Sustainable Markets Initiative's Financial Services Task Force, Fidelity International, Capital Markets, London ..., with purpose Inaugural meeting of the Taskforce on Scaling Voluntary Carbon Markets...*

*...could you please provide the following information:*

- \* A full list of attendees, including full names and titles as well as who the attendee represents*
- \* A copy of the meeting agenda*
- \* Meeting notes/minutes taken during the meeting, as well as any briefing notes and papers*
- \* Any correspondence associated with the attendees, including debriefs of the meeting via email or other forms of communication."*

Following a search of our records, we can confirm that HM Treasury does hold information within the scope of your request. We have released some information to you contained in Annexes to this response, these are:

*For the meeting held on 01/03/2021 between Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP and Bill Winters*

- The e-mail exchange between the Chancellor's office and Bill Winter's office to arrange a date for a call
- The minutes of the call between the Chancellor and Bill Winters
- Briefing for the Chancellor for his calls with Bill Winters and Dame Clara Furse

*For the meeting held on 01/03/2021 between Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP and Dame Clara Furse*

- The e-mail exchange between the Chancellor's office and Dame Clara Furse's office to arrange a date for a call
- The minutes of the call between the Chancellor and Dame Clara Furse

*For the meeting held on 26/07/2021 between Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP and Dame Clara Furse*

- The e-mail exchange between the Chancellor's office and Dame Clara Furse's office to arrange a date for a call
- The minutes of the call between the Chancellor and Dame Clara Furse

*For the meeting held on 15/04/2021 between Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP and UK Carbon Markets Working Group*

- Briefing for the Chancellor for the UKVCM Forum meeting
- The e-mail exchange between the Chancellor's office and the UKVCM Forum
- Readout from the UKVCM Forum meeting
- Agenda for the UKVCM Forum meeting
- Annex from the UKVCM Forum meeting - UKVCM Forum Draft Terms of Reference
- Formal minutes from UKVCM Forum meeting
- Highlights from the Tour de Table
- List of attendees and biographies

The meetings between the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, and either Bill Winters or Dame Clara Furse respectively were held on the phone, with a Special Adviser and the Private Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in attendance. Minutes from these calls will have been taken on an informal basis by the Private Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

We have redacted information under the following exemptions under the FOI Act. These are qualified exemptions as we are required to balance the public interest between disclosure and non-disclosure.

**27 - international relations.** We accept there is a general public interest in transparency to improve public understanding of how Government works. However, we consider that disclosing this information would adversely prejudice relations between the UK and another country. Sharing the information would cause adverse harm to vital UK policy priorities and would not be in the public interest.

**31(1)(a) - the prevention or detection of crime.** In favour of providing the information, we acknowledge the public interest in transparency in the work of government. However

we consider that the disclosure of this information could expose the Treasury's security to vulnerability and aid those with criminal intent who may wish to access the building. Therefore, on balance we have decided that it is not in the public interest for us to disclose the parts of the information that engage this exemption. We therefore consider that the public interest lies in favour of withholding this information.

**35(1)(a) - the formulation or development of government policy.** In relation to the release of this information, we recognise that there is an inherent public interest in transparency and accountability of public authorities. We also recognise the broad public interest in furthering public understanding of the issues with which public authorities deal. There is a clear public interest in the work of government departments being transparent and open to scrutiny to increase diligence.

Balanced against this, with regard to section 35(1)(a), is the public interest in protecting the Government's ability to discuss and develop policies and to reach well-formed conclusions. The Information Commissioner has recognised that policy development needs some degree of freedom to enable the process to work effectively and we consider that there is a strong public interest in protecting information where release would be likely to have a detrimental impact on the ongoing formulation and development of policy.

There is a strong public interest in protecting against encroachment on the ability of ministers and/or officials to formulate and develop policy options freely and frankly. In this particular case the information relates to aspects of UK climate change policy which remain under development. We therefore consider that the public interest lies in favour of withholding this information. One document has been withheld under the exemption in Section 35(1)(a).

**35(1)(d) - the operation of any ministerial private office.** We recognise the public interest in understanding how the ministerial private office operates, however this information on its own will not add anything to the sum of public knowledge in terms of the way in which they are run, or in respect of the administrative support provided to Ministers. By contrast to this minimal public interest in disclosure, we believe that disclosure of the small amount of information being withheld would likely prejudice the effective running of the ministerial private office by causing the office to change the way it operates in the future, which we do not believe would be in the public interest.

**41(1)(b) - section 41(1)(b)** provides that information is exempt if disclosure of the information to the public (otherwise than under this Act) by the public authority holding it would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that or any other person. This is an absolute exemption which does not require us to consider the public interest balance in disclosure.

**43(2) - prejudice to commercial interest.** We recognise that there is an inherent public interest in transparency and accountability of public authorities, and in furthering public understanding of the issues which public authorities deal with. However, there is also a public interest in the Government not undermining the commercial position of private companies by releasing information which would normally remain confidential, and in maintaining bilateral stakeholder relations that are important to drive forward policy.

The information in question relates to an exchange of views with Bill Winters on markets in which Standard Chartered operates. We consider that commercial interest of Standard Chartered would be prejudiced by the release of this information. We therefore consider that the public interest lies in favour of withholding this information.

We have also redacted personal data under section 40(2) of the FOI Act. Section 40(2), by virtue of section 40(3A), provides an absolute exemption for third party personal data, where disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles set out in Article 5 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The first data protection principle requires the disclosure of third party personal data to be lawful, fair and transparent. We

believe that releasing the information would breach the first data protection principle, since it would be unlawful and unfair to release the information.

Finally, we are withholding some information in full under section 35(1)(a) for the reasons set out above.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us. Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Information Rights Unit

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If you are not happy with this reply, you can request a review by writing to HM Treasury, Information Rights Unit, 1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ or by emailing us at the address below. Any review request must be made within 40 working days of the date of this letter.

Email: [foirequests@hmtreasury.gov.uk](mailto:foirequests@hmtreasury.gov.uk)

It would assist our review if you set out which aspects of the reply concern you and why you are dissatisfied.

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The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF (or via their website at: <https://ico.org.uk>).